DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 822 SP 029 537

AUTHOR McCarty, John W.; And Others
TITLE Relationships between Staff Development Needs and Selected Parameters of Teaching and the School District.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 20p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; Inservice Teacher Education; *Needs Assessment; *School Districts; *Teacher Attitudes; Teaching Experience

ABSTRACT

The relationship of staff development needs of teachers with the type of school district, levels of assignment, school district size, and teaching experience was examined. Three hundred and twenty-two teachers responded to the "Staff Development Needs Assessment for Effective Schools" instrument which measured perceived staff development needs according to each of the 15 competencies as stated by the State Department of Education of the southern state where the study was carried out. There was a significant composite relationship between each of the 15 criterion variables of teacher perceived staff development needs and the combined set of predictor variables. There were significant differences among the types of school districts (municipal, county, and consolidated) in the areas of techniques, classroom organization, enthusiasm for subject taught, and helping pupils gain a positive self-concept. There was also a significant difference among the levels of assignment in the areas of reinforcing and encouraging pupil performance. There was a significant independent relationship between each of the criterion variables of teacher perceived staff development needs and teaching experience. (Author/AA)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED288822

# Relationships Between Staff Development Needs and Selected Parameters of Teaching and the School District

by

John W. McCarty

Jackson Public Schools

Rex Leonard and Edgar H. Bedenbaugh

University of Southern Mississippi

Running head: STAFF DEVELOPMENT

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SP 029 537

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Leonard

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Abstract

The relationship of staff development needs of teachers with the type of school district, levels of assignment, school district size and teaching experience was examined.

Three hundred and twenty-two (322) teachers responded to the Staff Development Needs Assessment for Effective Schools instrument which measured perceived staff development needs according to each of the 15 competencies as stated by the state department of education.

There was a significant composite relationship between each of the 15 criterion variables of teacher perceived staff development needs and the combined set of predictor variables. There were significant differences among the types of school districts in the areas of techniques, classroom organization, enthusiasm for subject taught, and helping pupils gain a positive self-concept. There was also a significant difference among the levels of assignment in the areas of reinforcing and encouraging pupil performance. There was a significant independent relationship between each of the criterion variables of teacher perceived staff development needs and teaching experience.

# Relationships Between Staff Development Needs and Selected Parameters of Teaching and the School District

"American schools can, without doubt, improve their performance" (Carnegie Report, 1986). Change and growth are endemic in our complex modern society; the school or staff which does not change is destined to atrophy, to become obsolete, and to be a burden rather than a bulwark to us and to the communities we serve (Day, 1981). This is particularly true in view of the increasing pressure put on schools by the upward expansion of the whole learning cycle.

The mandate of the public schools is to educate the children in order to help them meet a changing society. As an organization, a school district needs well-qualified administrators, teachers, and support personnel to meet this mandate. As the positions and job requirements within a school district become more complex, the importance of staff development programs increases (Rebore, 1982). Therefore, staff development is an important part of school reform. We cannot improve the quality of education in our schools without improving the quality of teachers in them (Holmes Group, Inc., 1986).

Staff development in the public schools has become a serious concern since the 1970s. Staff development should

not be confined to inservice education alone, although it includes inservice teacher education. Rather, staff development should be a process by which both administrators and teachers set goals to improve the school or school system and meet the needs of individual staff members while carrying out needed changes.

The literature on staff development suggests that staff development efforts be guided by clear straightforward goals. Moreover, these goals should be determined, at least in part, by those whose lives will be affected by intended outcomes. Schambier (1983) accepts Monette's (1977) four questions to be considered by staff development planners: (a) Who can best perceive the staff development needs? (b) To what extent do selected needs pertain to individuals and to the system? (c) How can staff development planners prepare themselves to deal with shifting needs? (d) What critical relationship exists between needs and the operational philosophy of the institution? Answers to these questions may well determine which attitudes toward organizational growth and staff development will prevail. A careful analysis of staff development needs along with appropriate training activities can improve teacher performance.

The 1980s may be remembered as a decade of an outpouring of concern for the quality of American

education. The nationwide effort to improve our schools and student achievement rivals those of any period in American history (Carnegie Report, 1986). In what may be stated as the American way, the initiative has been seized by state political leaders, volunteer business groups, local officials, higher education leaders, professional educators, citizens, and parents. All have sought the reasons for a perceived decline in the quality of American education. Much as been accomplished. New requirements and standards have been put in place in many states. Staff development is not only mandated by the law in many states, but is a desirable activity to which each school must commit human and fiscal resources if it is to meet the challenge of school improvement.

The major purpose of this study was to assess the teacher perceived staff development needs as they relate to the type of school district, level of assignment, school district size, and teaching experience in selected public schools.

## Method

Two districts of each type from participating selected municipal separate school districts, consolidated school districts, and county unit school districts in a southern state were selected for this study. The sample for this study consisted of approximately 500 teachers randomly

selected from the school districts. The sample reflected a similar proportional stratification of teachers as the state at large and was 20% of the total population of 2,501 elementary and secondary teachers from the six school districts which participated.

Teacher perceived staff development needs was measured by the Staff Development Needs Assessment for Effective Schools, an instrument created locally containing 75 characteristics of effective teaching. It was developed by the Director of Planning in one of the municipal school districts after a review of pertinent literature. The instrument had constructs representing 15 competencies for effective teaching mandated by the education reform act passed by the state legislature. The 75 statements were audited by a committee of teachers spanning grades one through twelve followed by field testing to determine readability and reliability. The instrument on test/retest basis achieved a coefficient of .87. This coefficient was obtained on the basis of 135 elementary and secondary teachers employed in a municipal school district during the 1985 school year.

Teachers responded to the Staff Development Needs Assessment for Effective Schools on a five point scale. The scale was as follows: 5 - critical (I need help now); 4 - needed (I need help now but not to the degree of [5]

critical); 3 - somewhat needed (I could use some help, but not to the degree of [4] needed); 2 - seldom needed (I could use some help, but it is not necessary); 1 - never needed (I have adequate skills).

A full multiple regression model was constructed using type of school district, school district size, level of assignment, and teaching experience as predictors for each of the 15 components of the criterion variable of teacher perceived staff development needs to determine the extent of multiple relationships between the predictors and criteria. This model was then used to determine independent relationships between each of the 15 criterion variables and each predictor while controlling for the others.

## Results

A total of 324 (64.8% of return rate) instruments were returned and 322 were usable. Table 1 shows that the distribution of teachers in the sample corresponds closely with that of the state population. The mean responses in Table 2 reveal agreement among the respondents across each competency. None of the competencies were perceived as being in serious need as the range of mean need varied from a low of 2.1 to a high of only 2.8. The large standard deviation in the variable of district size was not considered unusual because the number of teachers employed

in the selected districts ranged from a low of 60 to a high of 1877.

In Table 3 most of the competencies are highly intercorrelated. Competency 7 (demonstrates a variety of teaching methods) and competency 14 (demonstrates high expectations) have less strength of association than other combinations. Competencies 8 (reinforces and encourages), 9, (demonstrates an understanding subject) and 10 (organizes time, space, materials) have the highest intercorrelations indicating that teachers tended to give these three competencies similar priority patterns with respect to perceived need for staff development.

Table 4 shows significant composite relationships between each of the criterion variables of teacher perceived staff development needs and the best weighted combination of the predictor variables of school district type, school district size, level of assignment, and teaching experience.

The staff development need areas of techniques, classroom organization, enthusiasm for subject taught, and helping pupils gain a positive self-concept were independently related to type of school district when the other predictors were controlled. When school district size, district type, and teaching experience were held constant, only one dependent variable, reinforcing and

encouraging pupil performance, showed a significant relationship with level of assignment.

There was a significant independent relationship between every criterion variable of teacher perceived staff development needs and teaching experience while holding constant type of district, size of school district, and level of assignment. Size of school district was not found to be an independent predictor of any of the perceived staff development needs of classroom teachers.

## Discussion

The findings of this study indicated significant composite relationships between each criterion variable of teacher perceived staff development need and the predictor variables of type of school district, level of assignment, school district size, and teaching experience. The data indicated similar distributions of perceived staff development needs among all of the teaching competencies considered within the scope of this study.

Teachers in all types of districts expressed a need for staff development. This finding was in agreement with Rebore (1982) who argued that teachers want a staff development program that focuses on updating subject area skills and knowledge, on teaching methods and practices, and on the advances in instructional materials and equipment). The types of school districts showed

significant differences in perceived staff development needs of teachers in the areas of helping pupils gain a positive self-concept, demonstrating enthusiasm for teaching and learning for the subject being taught, organizing of time, space, materials, and equipment for instruction, and using instructional techniques, methods, and media related to the objectives. Generally, teachers in municipal districts perceived a lesser need for staff development than teachers in county or consolidated districts. Practically speaking, the differences were small even though they were significant. This finding is shown by the relatively small drop in RSQ for these variables in Table 4.

Competency 8, reinforcing and encouraging learner involvement in instruction, was the only criterion independently related to level of assignment. Lieberman and Miller (1981) mentioned this result in their study of staff development needs of teachers. Here again, practical implications for this finding would be limited due to the small drop in RSQ.

Based upon the consistency among the competencies, all teachers seemed to have a perceived need for staff development regardless of the number of teachers employed in that district. Lieberman and Miller (1981) also found that inservice activities are most effective when planned

around the needs of the teacher and that these needs do vary among teachers. Findings in this study are in agreement. The more experienced teachers tended to perceive less need for staff development across all 15 competencies than did those teachers with less experience.

The process of school improvement is complex. It will require comprehensive and systematic planning. The planning process should contain both long range and short range goals, staff development, and evaluation. The researcher suggests that the findings of this study could be used by an educational administrator in developing a staff development plan for a school district.

In summary, as accountability increases, there should be a concurrent increase in the efforts of administrators to become more knowledgeable of factors which will influence pupil achievement. As performance of the staff through staff development improves, achievement will, hopefully, increase.

References

Carnegie Corporation, Task Force on Teaching as a Profession of the Carnegie Form on Education and the Economy. (1986). A Nation Prepared: Teacher for the 21st Century (LB1775, C34, p. 16). New York: Author.

Day, B. (1981). Foreward. In Betty Dillon-Peterson (Ed.), Staff Development/Organization Development (p. viii). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Holmes Group, Inc. (1986). Tomorrow's teachers: A report of the Holmes group (p. 23). East Lansing, MI.: Author.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1981). Synthesis of research on improving schools. Educational Leadership, 38(7), 583-586.

Monette, M. L. (1977). The concept of educational need: An analysis of related literature. Adult Education, 27, 116-127.

kebore, R. W. (1982). Personnel administration in education: A management approach. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Schambier, R. F. (1983). Staff development: A carrot or a stick? A paper presented to the 1983 National Adult Education Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. ED237658.

TABLE 1

COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE COMPARED TO STATE WITH RESPECT TO TYPE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT AND LEVEL OF TEACHING ASSIGNMENT

| VARIABLE | N = 324 | FREQUENCY | | PERCENT | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | STATE | SAMPLE | STATE | SAMPLE |
| Type of District | | | | | |
| Municipal | | 10,890 | 151 | 44 | 46 |
| County | | 11,335 | 161 | 46 | 50 |
| Consolidated | | 2,491 | 12 | 10 | 4 |
| Level of Teaching Assignment | | | | | |
| Elementary | | 13,347 | 170 | 54 | 53 |
| Secondary | | 11,369 | 154 | 46 | 47 |

TABLE 2

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF NUMBER OF TEACHERS EMPLOYED, ACTUAL NUMBER OF YEARS EXPERIENCE, AND COMPETENCIES

| VARIABLE | N = 322 | MEAN | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of teachers employed | | 783.7 | 732. |
| Actual number of years experience | | 11.4 | 7. |
| Competencies: | | | |
| 1. Plans instruction | | 2.6 | . |
| 2. Organizes instruction | | 2.8 | . |
| 3. Obtains and uses information | | 2.6 | . |
| 4. Uses information about the effectiveness of instruction | | 2.5 | . |
| 5. Techniques, methods, media | | 2.5 | . |
| 6. Communicates with pupils | | 2.1 | . |
| 7. Demonstrates a variety of teaching methods | | 2.7 | . |
| 8. Reinforces and encourages | | 2.5 | 1. |
| 9. Demonstrates an understanding of subject | | 2.3 | . |
| 10. Organizes time, space, materials | | 2.4 | . |
| 11. Demonstrates enthusiasm for subject | | 2.3 | . |
| 12. Helps pupils develop positive self-concepts | | 2.5 | 1. |
| 13. Manages classroom interactions | | 2.7 | 1. |
| 14. Demonstrates high expectations | | 2.3 | . |
| 15. Meets professional responsibilities | | 2.3 | 1. |

TABLE 3

PEARSON CORRELATION MATRIX OF THE VARIABLES
LEVEL, SIZE, YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, COMPETENCIES 1-15, AND TYPE

| | Size | Exp. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level | 24 | 05 | 01 | 01 | 02 | -01 | -05 | -06 | -08 | 05 | -05 | -10 |
| Size | | 10 | -23 | -19 | -23 | -21 | -20 | -19 | -28 | -19 | -19 | -21 |
| Years Experience | | | -60 | -64 | -65 | -68 | -61 | -63 | -62 | -67 | -68 | -64 |
| 1. Plans instruction | | | | 83 | 87 | 84 | 78 | 73 | 71 | 69 | 71 | 64 |
| 2. Organizes instruction | | | | | 88 | 81 | 83 | 77 | 79 | 72 | 71 | 67 |
| 3. Obtains and uses information | | | | | | 85 | 84 | 80 | 76 | 75 | 71 | 68 |
| 4. Uses info. about effect. of instr. | | | | | | | 81 | 86 | 77 | 74 | 74 | 69 |
| 5. Techniques, methods, media | | | | | | | | 83 | 80 | 79 | 72 | 77 |
| 6. Communicates with pupils | | | | | | | | | 76 | 79 | 74 | 76 |
| 7. Demo. a variety of teach. meth. | | | | | | | | | | 79 | 73 | 80 |
| 8. Reinforces and encourages | | | | | | | | | | | 83 | 87 |
| 9. Demo. an understanding subject | | | | | | | | | | | | 87 |

TABLE 3 (Continued)

| | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | Type 1 | Type 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level | -05 | -04 | -07 | -04 | -06 | 23 | -23 |
| Size | -20 | -18 | -19 | -26 | -25 | 88 | -81 |
| Years Experience | -62 | -65 | -68 | -49 | -65 | 07 | -06 |
| 1. Plans instruction | 61 | 74 | 73 | 61 | 66 | -22 | 19 |
| 2. Organizes instruction | 61 | 70 | 69 | 55 | 64 | -19 | 16 |
| 3. Obtains and uses information | 60 | 74 | 75 | 59 | 69 | -20 | 16 |
| 4. Uses info. about effect. of instr. | 63 | 75 | 73 | 56 | 70 | -20 | 18 |
| 5. Techniques, methods, media | 65 | 78 | 74 | 56 | 70 | -19 | 23 |
| 6. Communicates with pupils | 68 | 77 | 71 | 59 | 73 | -16 | 19 |
| 7. Demo. a variety of teach. meth. | 69 | 76 | 75 | 51 | 73 | -27 | 23 |
| 8. Reinforces and encourages | 80 | 84 | 80 | 61 | 84 | -18 | 19 |
| 9. Demo. an understanding subject | 78 | 85 | 76 | 60 | 82 | -18 | 18 |
| 10. Organizes time, space, materials | 83 | 87 | 80 | 59 | 85 | -20 | 22 |

TABLE 3 (Continued)

| | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | Type 1 | Type 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. Demo. enthusiasm for subject | | 83 | 82 | 70 | 79 | -20 | 21 |
| 12. Helps develop self-concepts | | | 85 | 64 | 85 | -18 | 21 |
| 13. Manages classroom interactions | | | | 72 | 80 | -17 | 18 |
| 14. Demo. high expectations | | | | | 64 | -23 | 22 |
| 15. Meets professional resp. | | | | | | -21 | 19 |
| Type 1 | | | | | | | -93 |

Decimals have been omitted.
Correlations .11 are significant at .05.

TABLE 4

REGRESSION RESULTS

| Criterion | Full Model RSQ | RSQ Change From Full Model | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Type of School District | Level of Assignment | Size of School District | Teaching Experience |
| 1. Plans Instruction | 395* | 005 | 007 | 001 | 335* |
| 2. Organizes Instruction | 437* | 004 | 006 | 000 | 394* |
| 3. Obtains and Uses Information | 459* | 004 | 007 | 004 | 398* |
| 4. Uses Info. About Effect. of Instr. | 490* | 003 | 004 | 001 | 444* |
| 5. Techniques, Methods, Media | 417* | 022* | 001 | 001 | 355* |
| 6. Communicates with Pupils | 426* | 010 | 000 | 004 | 377* |
| 7. Demo. A Variety of Teaching Meth. | 444* | 008 | 000 | 002 | 359* |
| 8. Reinforces and Encourages | 480* | 008 | 014* | 001 | 429* |
| 9. Demo. an Understanding of Subj. | 483* | 004 | 000 | 001 | 443* |
| 10. Organizes Time, Space, Material | 448* | 016* | 001 | 001 | 396* |
| 11. Demo. Enthusiasm for Subj. | 417* | 013* | 000 | 000 | 370* |
| 12. Helps Pupils Devel. Self-Concept | 459* | 018* | 001 | 000 | 412* |

TABLE 4 (Continued)

REGRESSION RESULTS

| Criterion | Full Model RSQ | RSQ Change From Full Model: Type of School District | Level of Assignment | Size of School District | Teaching Experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. Manages Classroom Interactions | 486* | 005 | 000 | 001 | 446* |
| 14. Demo. High Expectations | 286* | 002 | 000 | 007 | 219* |
| 15. Meets Professional Resp. | 454* | 000 | 000 | 007 | 392* |
| Degrees of Freedom | 5/316 | 2/316 | 1/316 | 1/316 | 1/316 |

*Significant P .05
Decimals have been omitted.